PEACE CORPS volunteer

DECEMBER 1968 – JANUARY 1969

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The Peace Corps and its host countries, at more levels, are working to form

A growing partnership

Rodolfo Estrada is a Guatemalan agricultural engineer who, at 27, has formed his own agricultural consulting firm. He is also a Peace Corps staff member in charge of a youth development program in Guatemala. Estrada travels around the country working with Volunteers on the planning and execution of courses to motivate an interest in learning among Guatemalan youth.

In Senegal, Peace Corps associate director Alioune N'Diaye supervises Volunteer participation in the country's program of Animation Rurale, or rural vitalization, which helps residents of rural areas better their living conditions. N'Diaye, for three years the director of training for Animation Rurale, was the first host national to be named to a Peace Corps staff position in Africa.

M. K. Pathik joined the Peace Corps staff in his native India after serving for a year as a Volunteer to America in the pilot program for the "exchange" Peace Corps. Pathik is a special assistant for programming for Peace Corps India.

Estrada, N'Diaye and Pathik are examples of a growing trend in the Peace Corps to involve more host nationals in the agency's planning and operations.

There are presently more than 20 host nationals serving in professional staff-level positions in Peace Corps programs throughout the world. Their jobs range from Program Technical Representative positions for specific projects, such as health, to special assistants for programming, to serving as associate Peace Corps directors.

The Peace Corps calls the trend "binationalism," a vague word recently defined by deputy director Brent Ashabranner as "the joint planning and executing of programs in which, at each stage, the host country is the senior partner."

Director Jack Vaughn speaks of

Fabio Roldan (seated), an experienced educator and public administrator, is the director-coordinator of Peace Corps education programs in Colombia. Another Colombian on the Peace Corps staff is Alfonso Ossa, who directs the co-op program. Ossa was formerly director of the cooperative department of the Instituto Nacional de Abastecimientos (Provisions).

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ON THE COVER: Three Peulh women, a woodcut by Augusta Lucas. See page 13.

the increased involvement of host nationals as "integration." In an address to the International Secretariat of Volunteer Service last summer, Vaughn said, "We have been guilty in years past of programming and operating according to our own judgment as to what was needed, what fields, how many Volunteers. We're no longer making that mistake. We are integrating our training, we are bringing more and more host country people to the training center. We are integrating our programming, we are integrating our staffing. I would expect that in the next two years all of the people who support, professionally and technically, Peace Corps Volunteers abroad will be host country officials."

Overseas staff jobs are not the only ones being done by host nationals. This fall, for the first time in Peace Corps history, citizens of host countries are visiting U.S. colleges and universities to recruit Volunteers for the Peace Corps. Before the current academic year ends, the Peace Corps hopes to have a total of 16 host national recruiters.

Other offices of the Peace Corps are also experimenting with the binational concept. In a first for the Office of Evaluation, two Peace Corps evaluators joined four Hondurans who were specialists in community development, health, education and program writing to evaluate the Peace Corps program in Honduras last spring. The Office of Medical Programs is looking for ways to better integrate host country personnel into medical programs. Training, which probably has the longest history of involving host nationals, increasingly relies on them to teach language and cross-cultural studies. Host nationals are also playing key roles in in-country training programs.

As a philosophy, binationalism was even more widely treated during 1968. The subject was the topic for two of the four Regional Directors' conferences, and it has been discussed in Peace Corps gatherings everywhere.

Fuller implementation of the philosophy has not been without difficulties, however. The more specific problems range from finding the right man (or woman) for the job to figuring out the most effective way to hire and pay him.

Some host national staffers are former counterparts of Volunteers, or have served in previous staff jobs for the Peace Corps, such as training instructors or technical assistants. Eduardo Sotomayor, assistant coordinator for the heifer project in Ecuador, formerly worked in a Peace Corps training program at Montana State University. Before becoming an associate Peace Corps director in Colombia, Jaime Botero was a Contractor's Overseas Representative for the Peace Corps in Panama.

Hiring procedures vary. Methods include having salaries paid by the Peace Corps or the host government. Some questions have been raised re-

garding the use of classified materials, and other problems which might prohibit a foreign citizen's full participation as a Peace Corps staff member.

A more basic question is the two-sided subject of culture. On the one hand, it is argued, a host national's increased cultural sensitivity and ability to communicate is invaluable to effective Peace Corps operations in his country. On the other hand, it has been said that foreign nationals might not be able to give Volunteers the psychological and emotional support they need to function in a foreign environment.

These questions and many others about the subject of binationalism were discussed at the Latin America Regional Directors' conference this past summer. On the following pages, THE VOLUNTEER presents excerpts from the statements of two conference participants, Brent Ashabranner, deputy director of the Peace Corps, and Ricardo Zuñiga, a Chilean social psychologist who has worked in Peace Corps training programs.

Jorge Rodriguez is the Program Technical Representative for Peace Corps agriculture programs in Venezuela. An experienced agriculturalist, Rodriguez has worked for the Venezuelan Ministry of Agriculture, the Agrarian Reform Institute, and the Rural Welfare Council.

The deputy director of the Peace Corps proposes

A binational

By BRENT ASHABRANNER

I believe that technical assistance in its present form—whether offered by the Agency of International Development, the German Development Services, or by Peace Corps, has, at the very most, 10 years to live if we keep technical assistance in anything like its present format—and it might be less than ten years—it might be five years.

I say this because I sense around the world, certainly in Africa and Asia, a rapidly growing national and racial pride and, in many places, a latent xenophobia that will rapidly make technical assistance distasteful to them; national leaders will find it necessary to reject it. This will inevitably happen unless we can change the format to something that bears very little resemblance to what we have today, and I include the Peace Corps.

At the same time, I sense a much better understanding on the part of many leaders that the decisions for development must lie in the hands of the people of the country, that their government must decide their priorities, that they must decide the form of their institutions, that they must decide the structure and substance of their education programs, that they must decide what the 'good life' is for them, that the responsibility for determining the developmental process of their country cannot and should not be delegated in any form to outsiders.

Advice can be sought, but the fact that we are asked does not mean that

nal model

Senegal country director Tom Moore (left) and Africa Regional director C. Payne Lucas (right) discuss program with Alioune N'Diaye, associate Peace Corps director in Senegal and the first African to be named to a staff job.

we tell them what their institutions should be or what our idea is of the 'good life' for them.

The concept of binationalism is very widely understood and accepted in Peace Corps today. I doubt that you would find any staff member or Volunteer who would disagree with it.

There is agreement that this is philosophically the direction in which we should be moving. I think we should not be unnecessarily harsh on ourselves. I believe real progress has been made. I think the kind of programming that is going on in the Peace Corps is of a level and quality that was absolutely unknown in the early years of the Peace Corps. This is true because we are programming at every step with our host officials, in areas that they consider to be priority. We're certainly getting much better at it in training, bringing host country officials into training and taking our trainees in-country to benefit from host country technology and assistance. A few years ago it would never have occurred to anyone to have a host country official as training project director. We're doing it today. We have made progress in the hiring of technicians from host countries and making them real members of our staff. We have been rather slow in bringing onto Peace Corps staffs host country administrative members—not only policy people, but support people as well. Third country technicians should be thought about and debated. Some countries have refused this concept out of hand. I think this is something we should examine in terms of desirability.

It is not going to be easy; the perfecting of new techniques of integration and binationalism is perhaps going to become harder. It is going to take some real imagination, hard work, and rapport with the officials of host countries in which we have programs.

As a means of discussion and argument, I would like to outline what would be the ultimate model of integration of our program in host countries.

Program leadership

This would be a model in which the director of the program is an official of the host country; or perhaps, two or three directors—each ministry receiving Volunteers might have a director independent from the others. The director would be a Venezuelan or an Indian—and he would not be paid by the Peace Corps. He would be assigned by his government as the director. He would be in charge of Volunteers, and might not even be called a director. He would have ultimate responsibility for Volunteers and he would be in every sense an official of the host country. He would receive no pay at all from the Peace Corps. Further, there would be no resident Peace Corps staff in the country. The arrival of Volunteers in the country would have been determined by long standing program discussions carried out by a team from Peace Corps Washington.

A possible variation would be a resident Peace Corps program man. This Peace Corps programmer would not have any supervisory responsibility for Volunteers once in the country.

I see no legal obstacle to this proposal; I find nothing in the Peace Corps Act that says we can't do it if we want to. In fact, there is considerable evidence that this is one pattern intended for the Peace Corps in the original legislation. I am less certain about host country participation in the selection that goes on here in the United States. There might be fertile ground for discussion here. But host country nationals must understand what kind of Volunteers we can provide and what our limitations are.

All kinds of questions arise. What happens to the fabled Peace Corps spirit when there is no staff riding out to talk to Volunteers and instill (or rekindle) the spirit? How do we keep Volunteers alive to other purposes of the Peace Corps beyond technical assistance?

I would suppose that a partial answer rests with the host governments in selecting the right people to supervise Volunteer effort. Are they any less capable of doing this than we are? I have known many host nationals who understand Peace Corps in all its purposes, who are articulate and who believe in it as much as we do.

One experience that makes me be-

lieve that this kind of model is not a fantasy is our experience in Libya. We started a small program there. They requested English teachers; they were adamant that the Volunteers not be labelled Peace Corps Volunteers. We were not allowed to have a regular office, nor a Peace Corps director per se. We were permitted to send a staff member but he couldn't travel much, couldn't bring the Volunteers together for conferences, etc. The Libyans were perfectly willing to pay the whole freight. We paid for transportation to and from the country and for training. Everything else was paid by the Libyan government.

The Volunteers who went put in two tough years—and during that time the Israeli-UAR war took place with growing intensity of feelings in North Africa about Israel. The Volunteers not only survived—they flourished, and they did everything we expect Volunteers to do in addition to their teaching jobs. The Libyan government was so pleased, they asked for 300 more to replace the original 15. We're sending 125.

Now we can have a Peace Corps director and Peace Corps staff in Libya. We're putting one in, but I'm wondering if we should have. Perhaps we should have waited to see if it would work with 125 as it did with 15.

This is the ultimate model—there are all degrees of binationalism from that.

We can do much better with local hire, although there are a number of legal and financial restrictions on this.

Clearly we can do more than what we have done when we add to our staff a man who is in every way a technician. I see no reason why the local technician shouldn't be brought to Washington to go through the interview process and why he should not attend our staff orientation sessions, just as any staff member—whether we are paying his salary or the host country is paying his salary.

We can certainly go further than we have in the area of training. I don't see why eventually training programs can't be completely run by host country talent.

We can go much further in programming.

In conclusion, I want to repeat that our top priority is the integration of Peace Corps in a number of directions. For example, integration into American life by dispersing the Office of Public Affairs so that we now have Peace Corps staff members residing in Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, Boston. Soon we will have 30 or more Peace Corps staff members residing permanently at some of our larger universities. More integration in building up Peace Corps councils, and in determination to try to find ways to bring into Peace Corps elements of our population that have not appeared in sufficient numbers in Peace Corps.

We are interested in making sure that the Peace Corps effort in countries where we work is as closely integrated into the work of AID and other development agencies as possible—in terms of what the host country wants and in terms of what these agencies are doing that is related to what we are doing.

We have alienated a lot of people in the past. I think we have established our identity with a vengeance, and that we are mature enough now not to have this attitude—in fact, we are trying in a sense to get rid of our identity. We should work more closely with other Volunteer organizations—with the host country doing the orchestrating.

But most of all, most crucially, we are interested in the quality of integration of the Peace Corps into parts of the host country agencies in which we are working.

A Chilean social psychologist talks about Americans

Becoming aware of Americanism

Venezuelan lawyer Gustavo Vivas (right) is associate Peace Corps director for the municipal management program. Here he talks with physical education Volunteer Richard Holmes.

By RICARDO ZUNIGA

There is very little I can do to defend myself—expectations have to be made in terms of what anybody can do. I am the only non-U.S. citizen in this conference on binationalism. And I think that that in itself is enough of a contribution!

To go back to a starting point—my contact with the Peace Corps isn't that long, and I have been involved mostly in training situations: I am a social psychologist. The only way that I could work effectively in these training situations was to be left out of formal selection procedures.

My work has been in Puerto Rico, staying there for eight months, dealing with the problem of how to get Americans to become aware of their Americanism in a non-apologetic way; to realize that they are going overseas to work as American citizens rather than super-nationalists.

I get involved with three elements that pervade all their considerations: motivation—an opportunity to do their thing, a deep desire to be on their own, and humane consideration for things they wish to do. They are joining nothing—it is spontaneous. Peace Corps is something to get involved with—to help them identify. It is an element in their search for self-growth. It doesn't go any further. This element is very, very strong. They want to do it on their own. Latin America is sort of a desert for them—they will be out of the total system. It is a means for them of dis-joining. It is the difference between give and take—they are running away from something and running to something. They are escape-oriented.

This implies a very strong rejection of the system and the establishment. It is an interest in being outside anything that will make them part rather than whole. This implies without control or help from the authorities. Now, for the first time, they have the chance of not being helped and they are going to benefit from it.

There is the element of human contact—an individual relating to another individual: "I am going abroad to at least make one friend in another culture." No emphasis on making this achievement oriented; he is going there to be there—not to change anything.

The whole idea of area studies becomes very difficult for people who know that they are going to meet people as people. Trainees resent very strongly the generalizations of area studies.

There is a very great difficulty in making Volunteers see how culture bound they are. They feel they are running away from materialism, from capitalism, from Vietnam. Generally they are extremely frightened when they become aware of the source of patriotism in themselves. They are unaware of how much there is that they admire and respect in America, and xenophobia and the underlying possibility of real prejudice toward foreign nationals. Sure they're going to like everybody. When they realize that it is just as bad as what they left behind, then we're in a bind.

I am afraid that training is unable to create the right attitudes in a person before he gets to a country. I have seen very few Volunteers who really feel they have any need for staff. They really can't say what the job of a camp director should be. If nobody can see that a camp might need a staff, then there is a serious gap in the capacity of the Volunteer to work within a host country organization.

A role for staff

I am not sure that what the staff can accomplish will be accomplished. I think the Volunteer sees the people against the government officials—and that the Volunteer is absolutely convinced that he is the average Joe from America going to work with the average Joe there. He didn't need patronage at home and won't need it there, and is going to work to try to free the host country average Joe from patronage.

My next fear is that internationalism will come to Peace Corps by default. There is not enough sense of belonging—not enough sense of national pride.

This leads me to say:

• The problem of binationalism is primarily a problem of Volunteers rather than just of staff. I feel there is very little I can do here—it's like changing Congress. I think that the notion of binationalism has to be built on a weak spot in training. I think the success of this concept rests with recognition of the fact that the Peace Corps Volunteer is an American, reared as an American, and will return to America after a few short years.

• We cannot afford for the role of the Peace Corps to be administrative before it is educational. I am not proposing an overthrow. I think the performance of American staff is absolutely necessary for the growth of social awareness of Volunteers abroad.

As I see it right now, the Volunteer is raw material of high potential, but the growth of this potential into binationalism is too slow. If we are going to get Peace Corps rooted in Latin America, we must take Volunteers to a much higher point of binationalism than they are now at when they arrive in country. This is the basic necessity of what I see they need from the staff.

What will be the requirements necessary for a host national to work successfully with Peace Corps? The host country national will be burdened by non-U.S. citizenship, and there will be information that will be difficult for him to obtain. I also have in mind that feelings of discrimination will be strong in many Latin American countries, that is, discrimination by other host country nationals against the host country national who has now "sold out" and is getting paid by U.S. money.

I would not try to get somebody (a Latin) who has a clear-cut idea of "*gringo*" to work with the Peace Corps. I think there are big enough sectors of open-minded Latins who have no preconceived idea of "*gringo*" that we could tap . . . but we'll have to look hard.

I think that the host country national used as a bureaucrat in an eight-to-five job is not enough; basically because I think the Peace Corps is more than that—and if the person is intelligent, he will realize that it will demand from him more than just a salary and a job would. It has to be a person that you can trust the Peace Corps to.

The question of choosing which host country national to work with the Peace Corps is going to be a difficult one. He must believe in and understand the Peace Corps enough to realize that the people of his country are the ones who will really make the change.

A Volunteer looks at America as a sending country and discusses the

Limits of the Peace Corps idea

By JOHN OSBORN

"It is said that the presence of young Americans abroad improves the relations between the United States and other countries. This assumption at best seems dubious. On the American side it is a dismal fact that many Peace Corps Volunteers, including the most well-intentioned, begin in a remarkably short time to hate the people they are supposed to help."

—Richard Karp, former Volunteer, reviewing The Peace Corps Experience *for* Book Week Magazine *(February 11, 1968)*

"I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom Cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large and without mercy."

* * *

"The fulcrum of America is the Plains, half sea, half land, a sun high as metal and obdurate as the iron horizon, and a man's job to square the circle."

* * *

"Americans still fancy themselves such democrats. But their triumphs are of the machine. It is the only master of space the average person ever knows, oxwheel to piston, muscle to jet. It gives trajectory."

—Charles Olson, American poet

"In theory they were sound on Expectation. Had there been situations to be in. Unluckily, they were their situation. . . ."

—W. H. Auden, from "The Quest"

Of late the Peace Corps has begun to talk and act like a middle-aged woman verging on change of life. Much of her old zest is gone; she has lost self-confidence; her lovers seem to hang on more from a sense of duty than passion; she is uneasy in the presence of Youth and subject to rhetorical hot-flashes. She fears that somehow she is no longer making it.

It is not difficult to find reasons for the unease. The times have been unkind, our expectations too high, and our overseas experience baffling. We are no longer accepted uncritically by many of those who have supported us in the past; the interests of young activists and the liberal establishment lie elsewhere. Vietnam and our domestic crisis have taken their toll.

Most important, after eight years we cannot honestly say that our impact overseas has measured up to many of our original expectations. Not that we expected to transform the underdeveloped world. But we did expect to be different and we did expect to work hand-in-hand with the people we served.

Beyond the 'job'

By and large this simply has not happened. We have done our *jobs* well, but few of us have tried to enter and understand and communicate with the cultures in which we are working. At times we have been as arrogant as other Westerners who have preceded us. Often we are viewed with suspicion by the very governments which have asked for our help.

What is wrong? Why is it wrong? And what can be done?

I begin with the same misgivings as everyone else: that we are not as good as we think we are, that we could be better. But I think we have misunderstood our failures. Until recently it has been commonplace to attribute them to lack of will or incorrect ideology. But neither view is accurate. It is not that the times have passed us by or that we have not tried harder. Our failures are more fundamental.

The Peace Corps "is" its Volunteers and what the Peace Corps "is" on a given day depends on what these Volunteers are doing and how they are doing it. Washington does not count; the Cold War does not count; our domestic crisis does not count; even the profound disillusionment of Youth in 1968 does not count. The Peace Corps "is" its Volunteers. If we are failing, it is this level of activity which must be examined.

I see our overall failure as one of *communication*, a sum of imperfect meetings between Volunteers and their hosts. We do not really understand each other. There is little dialogue between us. The cultural barriers that separate us have not been breached.

It has often been said that it is not really necessary to know the language or to understand the culture of the people we serve, that it is not even necessary to get too close to the people. After all, the Peace Corps has been invited overseas to do *jobs*. Our hosts want professionals. We should stress technical studies in training.

At first glance such an argument seems pragmatic and sensible. I do not think it is.

Because in education and development—as in politics—means and ends cannot be separated. Knowledge is perhaps neutral, but the act of teaching is not. *What* a man knows is not

necessarily important; but *how* he uses and manipulates that knowledge is important. Ways of thinking are not innate; they are learned. They are part of each man's linguistic and cultural heritage. They are learned by countless encounters with one's fellow beings, who usually share certain assumptions about the world. They are learned by a process of osmosis: a sixth sense.

Communication between human beings is complex because it proceeds at several levels. A man speaks with many voices; he hears with many ears; the voices and ears are those of his culture, his language, his religion and his ego. In human encounters it is the *situation*—not necessarily the words exchanged—which is important.

The need for overseas assistance is clear. The underdeveloped nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America are being drawn into a world community. This world is largely industrial. It is expansive. It is technologically sophisticated. Radios, jet airplanes, newspapers and politics have made this world a fact of life which each of these nations sooner or later must face. They must meet the world halfway or be absorbed. To do this they require certain skills. They lack trained manpower. They cannot yet do certain things for themselves.

But the needs of these countries go beyond the simple acquisition of Western knowledge and skills. The information and techniques must be effective knowledge. The people we are assisting must *understand* what we are teaching them. And not only understand. They must assimilate this knowledge on their own terms. They must feel that this knowledge is as much theirs as ours, something which can be manipulated and shaped to do *their* bidding.

Concern for people

In short, anyone who is truly concerned with benevolent foreign aid must be concerned ultimately with people. The colonial masters and missionaries who preceded us were content merely to slap Western facades on the non-Western societies which they encountered. They were not interested in syncretic change. As a result, the new economic and social sectors which they introduced into their captive traditional societies were hollow, Western facsimiles. The people who were brought into these sectors from the traditional societies were treated as inferiors. And this *made* them inferior in fact. The means determined the ends. The first generations of educated in Africa, Asia and Latin America were unable to discover and take hold of the content of the Western revolution and remake it to suit the needs of their own people.

We are nicer people than our predecessors. We are on the side of our hosts. We are fond of saying that we are their best friends. But we have not examined *our* methods carefully. And the truth is that in day-to-day encounters with our hosts, on and off the job, we do not differ much from those who have gone before us. We remain outsiders, not of their world, Western wizards with prophetic and magical powers. Our words glow in the dark.

There are reasons for this.

People are projective. Born into a stark physical world of uncertain meaning of purpose, our ancestors

This cartoon was posted in the Office of Evaluation with the caption: "Evaluator's Guide to Training Programs 1) Sensitivity Session"

"Alienate from your partner,
Relate to your neighbor's mate,
Overcome your inhibitions,
And really communicate."

Drawing by W. Miller; © 1968, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

created a second, more orderly world of human forms and sounds. They created a culture and a language and these became their world. This human world is our heritage.

Our perceptions are the perceptions of our language and our culture. We see what is visible to us. But the seeing itself is an act of definition. Our intellectual universe is curved; every perception leads ultimately to ourselves. We are our situation.

Human language and culture, however, are not universal. Americans, Asians, Latin Americans and Africans are the children of a particular time and place. We speak different languages and we move in different cultures. We have heard our languages and dealt with adult and infantile representatives of our societies since birth. And this experience forms the foundation of our adult behavior.

Grown, we are child-men, limited by specific ways of saying, seeing and doing. Our experiences urge us to approach our adult worlds in words and ways found successful in childhood and adolescence.

People everywhere seek the familiar. It is comfortable and convenient. But for the American in traditional Asia, Africa or Latin America, the familiar is difficult to find. The people here are radically unfamiliar, with their own ways of seeing, saying and doing. These ways are difficult for us to learn and understand. The temptation to shape our overseas environment and force it to assume familiar proportions is always with us. The voices of our childhood are loud and insistent.

How transform a place into something it is not? How make familiar what is, by definition, not familiar? There are two possibilities: intellectual or physical manipulation. One can fantasize or rebuild. A fish on land gulps and flops its way through imaginary water; if it could it might build aquariums.

As Americans we represent a society whose assumptions about the world are, in many ways, unique. We are a peculiar race, the spawn of a motley crowd of moral malcontents: soldiers of fortune, Indian scouts, land speculators, stern dissenters, tinkerers, political refugees. They came, most of them, because they were obsessed, because they needed room and freedom to project and shape their visions of how things should be. They were tough and often callous. They shared the common Calvinist belief that the world was made for man and Hard Work for the greater glory of God. Bible in hand they seized a green continent and twisted it into a steaming, clanking boilerworks with a gross national product of $800 billion.

The transformation was an act of will, a matter of brute force. The product was a society built in the image of Newton and Darwin: orderly, progressive and profitable.

The building, we now realize, was done with little compassion or foresight. The builders were blind to much of the filth and injustice generated by their own will to power. And their victories over things material went to their heads. They rested content with the machine as sufficient analogy for all process. As with technology, so with man: if the physical world could be shaped, so also with society. We have inherited this uniquely Western arrogance.

Questions are important

Our science and technology have changed greatly in the past fifty years. We are not so sure about the progressive, clockwork universe of our forebears. The universe is ambiguous and paradoxical. We realize now that our understanding of its nature depends considerably on the questions which are asked. Reluctant orientals, we begin to accept this.

Not so with our social endeavors. We press on with the grim determination of New England theocrats. We demand facts and figures. We build models, for our computers. We search for the impersonal dynamics of society. We abstract riots until it is possible to wonder if people were ever involved at all; we measure wars for people's minds in "kill ratios" and price indices. And then, our minds made up, we respond with bulldozers and dollars, hard goods with shape and weight, whose numbers can be counted, whose achievements can be measured.

Our weakness is at heart the weakness of all mankind: we see the world as we have been taught to see it. But Americans have unusual difficulty in dealing with people. We are benevolent, sincere and well-meaning. But we are also authoritarian and we judge our projects by their intent. This makes us bad listeners. We are most comfortable when we are preaching; talking with someone whose assumptions are not our own is unsettling, and we tend to avoid it like the plague. We prefer numbers and printed words. They can be manipulated. People talk back.

A national policy can, perhaps, justifiably be founded on the infantile desire to preserve, protect and live with what is familiar. But programs of change, development, aid and reform cannot. Latin American peasants are not Jeffersonian yeoman-democrats. And displaced Asian subsistence farmers do not necessarily want to live in a crowded housing development with laundromats and television. Imagine an imperial fish, in terra-lung, preaching algae development and water spawning to a school of robins.

Such criticism and comment is, of course, not really new. Nor are the assumptions I make about the goals of the Peace Corps. It has all been said before. But the relationship between national attitudes and policies and our failure to achieve these goals has not been adequately explored. The Peace Corps is, after all, an expression of American policy. And we, the Volunteers, are the children of America.

The origins of the Peace Corps can be traced back to the bad old days of East-West confrontation and the competition of ideologies in the third world. Foreign aid, in those days, the late fifties and early sixties, consisted mostly of massive material injections to tottering strategic countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, not to mention Europe. America then, as now, was concerned about the inroads being made by subversive communism; it sought to preserve the *status quo*. Our method was to display and donate our wealth and to preach democracy, but we neglected to teach the means by which either could be obtained. We did not understand then that our abundance and our democracy, such as it is, are inseparable.

This policy was not successful. It did not make converts because it never really touched the people of the countries it served. The underdeveloped nations refused to think and act like us.

The Peace Corps idea appealed to the government because it was a new way to Americanize the unfamiliar and bring our benevolence closer to the restless masses of the underdeveloped world. It promised to win friends for us and thereby make the world safe for democracy. For what

could be more irresistable than a young, clean-shaven, sincere college graduate? Certainly not a dour Marxist from a Leningrad locomotive shop.

Once founded, however, the Peace Corps tried to stand aloof from ideology. Because this was the only way it could gain admittance to the uncommitted nations. The architects of the Peace Corps were interested first in development, in the liberal belief that stability and good will would follow. They read their copies of *The Ugly American* carefully. They were sensitive to the norms of the countries they offered to assist. The Peace Corps, they emphasized, was not a reward for good behavior; there were no strings attached; it was a gift, a gift with a giver. They successfully shifted their emphasis from goods to people.

But here they stopped. When it came to the nitty-gritty of deciding what was to be done, the Peace Corps asked all of the questions. The underdeveloped nations had little say.

What were the problems in India?

How could things be made better than they were in Chile?

What were the *needs* of Malawi?

What did the *American* experience have to offer farmers in Kenya?

How could a Volunteer in Morocco win a village school headmaster to his point of view?

What was the best way to prepare a Volunteer for community development work in Brazil?

How should a Volunteer be paid overseas?

Should Volunteers in Iran be given motorcycles?

How and what should students in Tanzania be taught?

The Peace Corps asked its own questions. There was only a limited dialogue with the interested governments. And although this has begun to change in various programs and at various levels within the agency, the Peace Corps still has a strong tendency to try to think for the countries it serves.

How does this affect the individual Volunteer?

The tendency to ask questions and propose the answers affects, first of all, the programs to which he is assigned. Many are formulated first in Washington and then offered in packages to the host countries. "We would like to train thirty Volunteers to do agricultural extension work. Can you use them?" Very often the programs must be redefined or even abandoned by Volunteers once they are overseas because they are irrelevant and because there was little coordinated planning with officials of the host country.

The tendency to ask and answer all of the questions affects the training of Volunteers. We listen to American impressions of the host country and its people; we learn American procedures; our heads are stuffed with information. We are, in short, trained by Americans. In the past, host country nationals have contributed only to language training. Rarely did host country nationals help plan or direct a training program. And in spite of change, this tendency strongly persists.

The tendency to ask and answer all the questions finally affects the Volunteer overseas. Because when we arrive we think we know what the questions are. We are cocky. We do not "hear" our new culture. We immediately set about the business of selling *our* point of view. Only later do we sometimes discover how wrong we were.

Host nationals on staff

There is also the matter of organization. To my knowledge, there are no host country nationals in top positions of authority on the Peace Corps staff, either in Washington or overseas. Only a scattering of program advisers and some associate directors. When we deal with the official Peace Corps we deal most of the time with our own kind. And this shelters us from our situation. When things become uncomfortable or confusing or difficult or unhealthy or unsafe, we do not have to talk to our hosts. We can ignore the facts of life faced by our coworkers. The magic red, white and blue panic button is as close as the nearest telegraph office.

It is difficult to be a successful Volunteer. We have only two years. And the Volunteer bears the triple burden of his humanity, his nation and his organization. Everything he has learned, felt and heard in his life makes him uneasy in the presence of strangers. His nation has taught him to look for the challenging, to fight hard, and to expect success. His agency has told him what the questions are and coached him on the answers.

We are not trained to listen; we are trained to do. No wonder Volunteers fail often. We do not fail at our jobs. We fail to reach out and touch the people we are helping. We fail to allow them to come close to us. And in our isolation we begin to repeat the simple, prejudiced generalizations of those who have preceded us. They help us to explain our failures in simple, obvious ways.

We all agree on the goals. We want to come to the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America as equals. We want to work with our hosts, to sit with them, to ask questions and pose answers together.

But we have failed to reach these goals. Because we have not been insistent and precise about them. We must state our central task. The Peace Corps is a *method* of working with people of underdeveloped countries, a method which is the most promising way of bringing Western city dwellers and rural villagers together in the common task of making things better than they are. The Peace Corps begins with the assumption that the problems of underdeveloped countries are man-made. But we have skirted these problems.

It is because we have skirted the very issue which gives the Peace Corps substance that we are not really *that* much different from everyone else working overseas. And it is for this reason that the Peace Corps is no longer something special. We shy away from people problems—culture, politics and society—and in this year of political and social upheaval our shyness makes us irrelevant.

What must be done is this: we must —as Phillips Ruopp (September VOLUNTEER) has written—act now to restore the mutuality of the Peace Corps organization and the credibility of the Volunteer overseas.

The Peace Corps must be made over into a sort of action university in which both Volunteers and host country nationals can participate together. The Peace Corps is not a hardware store, or a community bank, or a welfare agency or an encyclopedia sales service. It should not be organized like one. The Peace Corps must be structured in such a way that both Volunteers and host country nationals can ask questions and explore answers together.

Volunteers must be trained to listen and to communicate. To operate effectively overseas in the manner described, a Volunteer must know the language of his people and he must know how to systematically tune-in their culture: their beliefs, their assumptions, their ways of seeing, saying and doing things.

Specific proposals follow naturally from these premises. I will list some of my own. But the list is not exhaustive.

• *Streamline Peace Corps Washington.* Bring in host country nationals to take part in the design and administration of our programs overseas. If we are to share in the building we should share the responsibility for the program's success. Government officials from the host countries could be brought to Washington to assist with planning and evaluation. Volunteers could help with administration. Or a civil servant training program could be developed in cooperation with burgeoning universities in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Civil servant trainees or political science students could be brought to Washington to gain experience in the administrative procedures of another government.

As for the American staff in Washington, may I suggest that the Peace Corps needs a *faculty,* not a staff. The questions must come from the field. The staff should support and advise.

• *Decentralize the Peace Corps.* Give greater freedom to each country. Reduce and streamline the overseas staffs. Find local substitutes. Train host country nationals to do the bulk of administration. Include at least one host country national on all decision-making bodies, a local associate director or even a co-director.

The in-country staff should be a sort of faculty-in-residence. We do not need an army of politicians, administrators and salesmen. The staff should be small. It should be as carefully selected and trained as the Volunteers. It should be in the field as much as possible, helping Volunteers and their co-workers solve problems. Staff members should be highly motivated and committed to more than just one or two years overseas. If such people cannot be found at home, then we should turn to the host country.

• *Continue to make language the first concern of training.* Intensive, relentless and total. The Peace Corps should state that fluency in the language is the key tool of the Peace Corps Volunteer in his day-to-day activities. He cannot enter another culture without it, regardless of the job, even if he works in an air-conditioned government office staffed by English speaking host-country nationals.

Language should be a criterion for selection. Later when technical studies are introduced, they should be conducted as much as possible in the language and host country nationals should be intimately involved in the teaching.

• *Have various forms of sensitivity training and practical experiences in group dynamics in all training programs.* For such studies in self-awareness to be successful they must come after selection. They cannot be made a part of the Peace Corps' selection process, though obviously they will play an important part in the Volunteers' *self*-selection. Such training must be constructive, not therapeutic or investigative. There must be complete openness between the professionals directing the studies and the Volunteers.

Such studies are necessary because a Volunteer must be sensitive to himself and to others in order to communicate. He must be aware of people as people, not as totally preprogrammed robots.

• *Streamline and de-emphasize area studies; substitute practical work in social science methods.* A Volunteer does not need extensive knowledge about the geography and customs of the country to which he is going. But he does need to know how to find these things out for himself, how to let the culture come to him, how to discover its biases and its dynamics.

A procedure of investigation could be developed by the Peace Corps, a streamlined *Notes and Queries in Anthropology* which the Volunteer would be required to follow and complete during his first months overseas. This would help sensitize him to his culture. A completed report would form the basis of his education to the culture.

• *Make in-country or at least "third-country" training the norm, not the exception.* All aspects of the training program would be improved by it. There is nothing that does more to make Volunteer training programs relevant than the real thing. It is difficult to delude yourself overseas; it is entirely possible in an American classroom. Think, for example, of what THE VOLUNTEER magazine would sound like if it were a forum for Volunteer and host country national opinion; think of what would happen if you tried to read it now—in local dialect of course—to some of your co-workers.

• *Strive for quality not quantity.* Selection should be tough, based on the needs which I have tried to outline in this article. No one will be served if we recruit people who are not really interested in this sort of work.

• *Begin to internationalize the Peace Corps; integrate it with other voluntary service organizations.* The idea is just too good to be entrusted solely to Americans. The public might change its mind. By putting the Peace Corps into the hands of many countries we would help ensure its continuity, its quality and its relevance to the needs of the interested underdeveloped nations, those of American or other national foreign policies.

The list could be continued and elaborated. But I am only skimming. Some of the innovations and reforms I am suggesting are already being tried. Others would, at this point, require a minor revolution within the Peace Corps Establishment. All of them are initially more bothersome and expensive. But in the long run they would pay off.

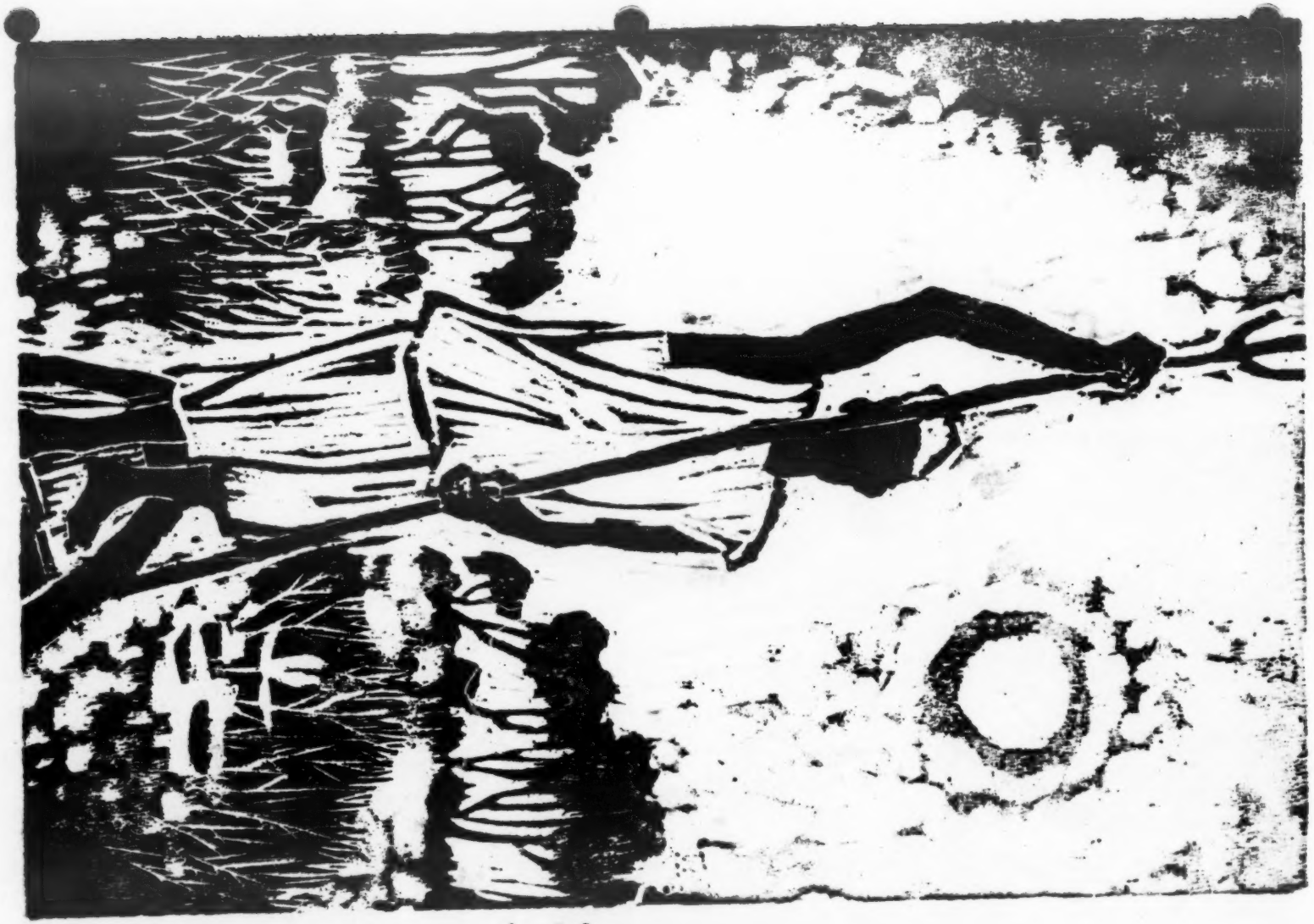
Would the public accept such changes, such an un-American program of foreign assistance? As America swings to the Right in 1968 there are grounds for pessimism.

But I am convinced, after three years, that such changes are essential. We must either change or come home. Because our resources must be allocated. There is unfinished business in our own country. It is not necessarily different from that overseas. But it may be more urgent. We are a big and powerful nation; our instabilities threaten the world.

The Peace Corps must face the question being asked on American campuses: do we have any right to ask young Americans, the best the country has to offer, to leave at this particular time to serve overseas?

I think we do. But only if we are relevant and effective. One thing is clear: America's young want no part of stale, self-defeating projects or policies, either at home or abroad. If the Peace Corps does not strive for the goals which it originally articulated, if it is no different than all of the other assistance programs available to the underdeveloped nations, then America's young will look elsewhere. And they will be right to do so.

John Osborn has been a secondary school teacher in Malawi for three years. He is a correspondent for THE VOLUNTEER *and a former newspaperman.*



Boatman

WOODCUTS OF Niger BY AUGUSTA LUCAS

Riverside scene

The daily life of the people of Niger is depicted in a set of 20 woodcuts done by Augusta Lucas during her Peace Corps service there.

Mrs. Lucas started out as a Volunteer in the Ivory Coast where she taught classes in literacy and household skills to village women. In August, 1966, Mrs. Lucas transferred to Niger. During her 20 months there, she served as an illustrator for an adult literacy program and as an artist for the audio-visual center in Niamey. At the center she designed flannelgraphs, posters, signs, booklets and maps for instructional purposes.

Born in Holland, Mrs. Lucas received an art teaching degree from the Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in the Hague. She then studied for one

year at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, Calif., and taught elementary school for five years. Mrs. Lucas has returned to a position she held just before joining the Peace Corps—part-time scientific illustrator for the University of California at Berkeley. The rest of her time is spent on her own art work.

A selection from Mrs. Lucas' Niger woodcuts appears on the following pages. The complete set was recently on exhibit in the Volunteer lounge at Peace Corps headquarters. The lounge features rotating exhibits of original art by Volunteers, staff and friends. Those interested in loaning art for display should contact Dale Gilles, Office of Volunteer Support, Peace Corps, Washington, D.C. 20525.

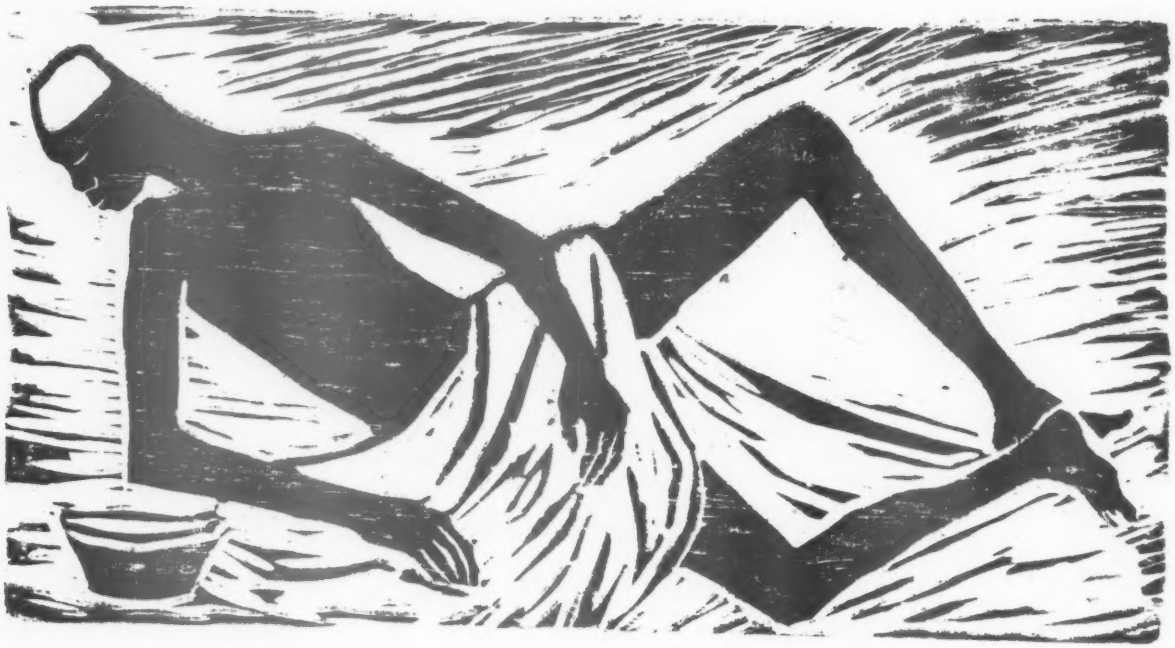
Touareg musician with native guitar

Three blind women

Auguste Lucas

Marabout, a religious leader

Senegal 1968



Beggar with bowl by his side

Merchant at the market

Two men pounding millet

Griot, a storyteller

Woman by the river

Last month THE VOLUNTEER *printed a review of* **Agents of Change, A Close Look at the Peace Corps,** *by David Hapgood and Meridan Bennett. This month we present excerpts from one of the book's chapters.** ☐ *As they state in their acknowledgements in the front of the book, the authors, between them, have evaluated 17 overseas programs and visited many more. In their book, they sort out the major kinds of jobs which Volunteers do, and devote a chapter to each, such as "The Peace Corps in Rural Action," "The Peace Corps in Public Health and Birth Control."* ☐ *Here we present "The Peace Corps in Teaching" (Chapter 3). Due to space limitations, some sections of the chapter have been deleted, specifically a portion dealing with Teaching English as a Foreign Language in West Africa, a subject previously treated by Mr. Hapgood for publication in* THE VOLUNTEER. *Reprinted courtesy Little, Brown and Company

'The Peace Corps in teaching'

"In most societies for most of recorded time, education has been a reactionary force rather than a progressive one," Adam Curle of Harvard has written. "Education, often closely associated with religion, has tended rather to hallow antiquity than to promote innovation."

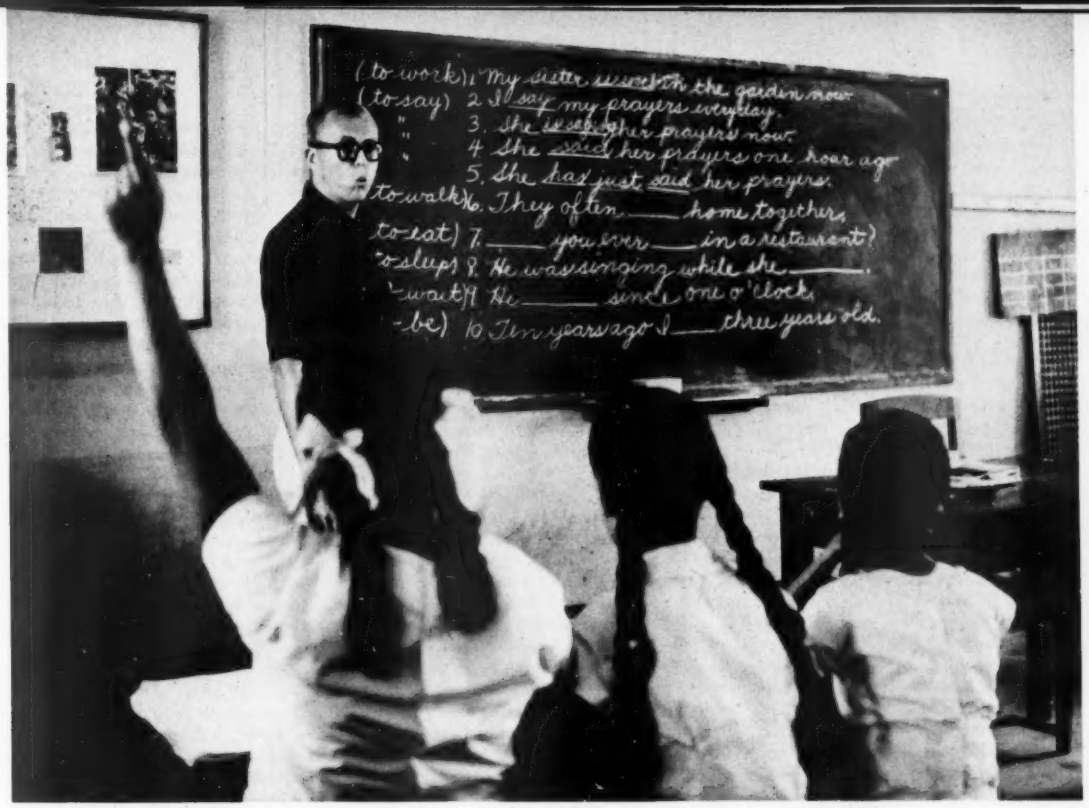
The basic purpose of schooling has been to transmit an approved way of life to the next generation—to make sure, that is, that children behave the way their elders want them to behave. Though they are also learning various kinds of skills, the children are constantly being guided toward accepted beliefs about how people should live their lives. In a traditional or religious society, children memorize the instruction of the Koran or the catechism. In an American school, the children get "citizenship" (i.e., proper behavior) grades. More important, their behavior is influenced by all sorts of "messages" they get every day in the classroom. For example, in *Culture Against Man,* Jules Henry describes the unspoken ways in which American children are taught to compete rather than cooperate. In the United States, a society that accepts a rapid rate of change, education also changes rapidly, though the schools are usually found toward the end of the line of march rather than in the lead. But in the traditionalist societies of the third world, school generally is the "reactionary force" described by Adam Curle.

An agent of change thinking along Curle's lines might well have hesitated before venturing into education in other countries. No such reservations deterred the Peace Corps. From the first days, education has been by far the agency's biggest activity. (By "education" we mean organized schooling, not learning in general. Learning is of course a central theme of all Peace Corps assignments.) For the first five years, more than half of all the volunteers were assigned to some form of teaching. Only in 1967 did the percentage of volunteers in education drop below half, to 48 percent; since the Peace Corps was growing in size, this meant the number of volunteers in teaching was still increasing. Their assignments were varied: they worked in primary schools in Jamaica, in universities in Peru and Ethiopia, in educational TV and physical education in Colombia, in adult literacy in Guatemala and the Ivory Coast. More than half of the teaching volunteers were in secondary schools. Among the continents, Africa has gotten the largest number of Peace Corps teachers, Latin America the fewest.

Prehistoric times

These patterns were set in the earliest days of the Peace Corps, prehistoric times in terms of American understanding of the third world. Americans had a great deal to learn—more accurately, to unlearn—and we are still in the dark ages. Peace Corps officials, in common with other Americans then and today, believed strongly in two ideas. One was that education of almost any kind is good. The other was "education for development," the idea that schooling is the lever of economic progress in the third world. Officials in the countries to whom the Peace Corps was offering volunteers seemed to share these beliefs about education; busy expanding their educational plants, they were prone to ask for teachers. The State Department looked on approvingly. Embassy officials overseas are preoccupied with youth; they spend a lot of time worrying whether the young elites are being infected by Karl Marx and Mao Tse-tung rather than trying to assess the depth of youth's concern for its own problems. Maybe the presence of Peace Corps teachers would convert the locals to a belief in the two-party system.

Perhaps a more decisive American myth influenced the early rush to schools. Especially in Africa, the American sees the foreigner as somehow cannibalistic—dark, dangerous, and motivated by animal urges which are hard to predict. Schools, recognizable centers of Western incursion into this cultural jungle, are places where the volunteer might be able to land on his feet. Schools are more associated with "civilization" than with the Heart of Darkness. They are safer. Any American who has traveled abroad will recognize that the fear of the "primitive" blows away only slowly, after the traveler discovers


(to work) 1. My sister is working in the garden now.
(to say) 2. I say my prayers everyday.
" 3. She is saying her prayers now.
" 4. She said her prayers one hour ago.
5. She has just said her prayers.
(to walk) 6. They often ____ home together.
(to eat) 7. ____ you ever ____ in a restaurant?
(to sleep) 8. He was singing while she ____.
(to wait) 9. He ____ since one o'clock.
(to be) 10. Ten years ago I ____ three years old.

Volunteer George Fries teaches English in Mwanza, Tanzania. His wife Lita also teaches.

that he can step out of safe American havens into a new culture and not be eaten alive.

Teaching was also the easiest job for the Peace Corps to take on. In a centralized school system, the job is standard throughout the nation, so the Peace Corps could plan for large numbers of volunteers with little effort. Teaching seemed the best, if not the only, job for these hordes of liberal arts college seniors who are applying to the Peace Corps. They had no professional skills: they couldn't plant a crop or set a fracture. So let them teach, Washington decided, and this was less an insult to the teaching profession than a manifestation of the view that education is intrinsically good: where the need is so great, any teacher is better than none. For much the same reasons, applicants who had no skills tended to ask for teaching positions.

The volunteers went into training in June or July, got a few hours of practice teaching—if they were lucky, for many never faced a class till they got overseas—and in September of each year the skies rained volunteer teachers all over the underdeveloped world. In the capital, the staff gave them their up-country location, and a few days or weeks later the volunteers passed through the school doors and confronted the principal, their fellow teachers and, most important, their students.

It happened thousands of times in hundreds of schools in dozens of countries, and it has been quite a confrontation. The variety among local people and circumstances was great, but the newcomer was always an American, usually young, and eager to help. It is touching to try to re-create the volunteers' expectations as they passed through those school doors. In their minds' eye, as they recounted it later, they had expected an austere classroom full of children as eager to learn as the volunteers were to teach. How could the kids not be eager? These countries were poor and illiterate and, with the end of colonial rule and the revolution of rising expectations, the children were being offered the chance to be the builders of a new society, to lift their people out of the ancient cycle of poverty and sickness and ignorance. The hope of a better future lay in these students. All they needed were the tools that education could provide. The volunteers would bring them the knowledge of the rich, industrial United States—even if they were teaching English, for language after all is the key that unlocks knowledge. Those were the expectations against which the reality of Peace Corps teaching must be measured.

Eager to memorize

Class turned out not to be what the volunteers had expected. Instead of students eager to learn, they found students eager only to pass the examination by memorizing all the possible answers. Rote learning—the mindless repetition word-by-word of the text—is the rule all over the third world. Almost anywhere, you can hear pupils reciting phrases whose meaning escapes them, often in a language they do not understand. The students learn to repeat the words; the content does not matter; nor does the system ask (or want) the student to reason. Standardized examinations, over which the individual teacher has no control, are also common. When the volunteers tried to vary from rote and the rigid syllabus, the pupils howled in protest. They had been taught to memorize—what right did the foreigner have to demand something else of them? "Sir, what kind of teacher are you? You will destroy us by not permitting us to pass the examination." Usually the headmaster or principal upheld the students. He himself was raised on rote.

For the volunteer in his classroom, the issues that mattered were specific and immediate. Like most people who are working rather than studying, the volunteers' interest became local and pragmatic; their concern was with *their* schools and *their* students. "My principal is an idiot" was a more important consideration to them than the theoretical underpinnings of Washington policy. If you're a volunteer in a secondary school your situation has characteristics in common with volunteers all over the world.

Your students are mostly adolescents, often of widely varying ages in a single class, and, especially if you're new to teaching, you are preoccupied with discipline. Some volunteers faced classes of seventy pupils, and student loads of five hundred. All five hundred were used to local teachers whose tool of persuasion was a whip. The volunteers' nonviolent American methods were misunderstood, and the class was in an uproar. To a young American, everything was strange: the curriculum, the language, the attitudes of both pupils and other teachers. Shaping young minds is a glamorous mission, but teaching, the volunteers found, is largely the grinding detail of preparing lesson plans and marking papers and, particularly if you are teaching beginning English, endless repetition in the classroom.

Reality outside the classroom, the volunteers found, also bore little resemblance to the picture they brought with them from home. Instead of austerity—the "mud-hut image" of the Peace Corps—some volunteers found themselves eating high off the hog, higher in fact than they had at home. "I never had it so good, and I won't have it this good when I go home," one teacher said frankly as she sat in her comfortable living room while her servant prepared dinner. That was in Africa. The idea had been that volunteers were to live on the same scale as their local counterparts, but it turned out in many cases that the counterparts lived very well indeed, because their living patterns had been set for Europeans rather than Africans. In the ex-British colonies, the volunteers found that the secondary school was a compound, literally walled off from Africa; town was often several miles away. The volunteers were assigned to a comfortable house, with a servant, inside the compound. "We're not volunteers," a teacher said in Nigeria. "We're contract teachers, the same as those who come here from Europe under contract to do the same job. We just have a lousy contract—that's the only difference."

Surprised by elite

Most of all, the volunteers discovered the elites of the nations in which they were serving. From Illinois, all Nigerians looked alike, and so did Filipinos and Bolivians. Up close, though, the volunteers found their new societies to be deeply divided, more deeply than their own America. On one side were the great mass of people, poor and illiterate; that was no surprise. But the ruling class—the small group of the "educated elite" who ran the schools—were far from the eager innovators of the volunteers' vision. The schools were the stronghold of the elite, and many of their traits shocked the youthful volunteer with his democratic, innovating spirit. They were, with individual exceptions, a class of overprivileged rulers, more concerned with cars and other material goodies than with progress, holding the masses in profound contempt; often they were lazy, irresponsible, corrupt or callous. The elites were above all fearful of change, and this fear permeated the schools they ran.

The volunteers were finding that there is a lot more to education than mastering such skills as English or mathematics. The cultural complexities of education are acute in ex-colonial countries. Two cultures are present and at war with each other in the schools: the traditional culture and the "Western" culture imposed by the colonial rulers. The conflict is most obvious in Asia and Africa, but it exists in much of Latin America, between Indian and Spanish in church as well as in formal schools. In the colonies, school was the main instrument of European cultural conquest. An example was the French colonial school, where Oriental and African children recited the famous textbook line: "Our ancestors, the Gauls, were tall men with fair hair and blue eyes." Absurd as this now seems, it illustrates the inner truth that colonial education literally deprived the children of their ancestors and substituted the Europeans as the source of all culture. Nor did this change with independence, for the colonial school had done its work all too well. Even today, volunteers teaching English in Africa get a text which makes the pupils recite: "Our faces are brown from the summer sun." The departing rulers left in power an educated elite that had been taught to despise their own heritage and worship the culture of those fair-haired Europeans. It was this educated elite that greeted the volunteers at the door of the school.

The colonial schools were also monstrously irrelevant to the needs of the nation. Today they are still turning out Europeanized clerks. The curriculum still comes from another world, and the textbooks make Dick and Jane look good by comparison. In one part of Africa, vocational students follow the syllabus of the

Steve Wolotsky observes class in the Ciudad Kennedy suburb of Bogotá, Colombia. Wolotsky works in educational television; visits classrooms to offer teaching suggestions.

Loretta Ann Leen teaches typing, filing and English in the Tri-Joadha Multi-purpose School in Biranj, Nepal. Here she reads a Dr. Seuss book to some of her students.

Guilds of London; they build fireplaces in 120-degree heat. In countries that desperately need better farmers, school teaches children to despise agriculture, and manual labor is a form of punishment. The message of the school is that education is how you get into the elite, and that means high status, high pay, and little work, all in an office. Secondary students in parts of Africa and the Middle East, the volunteers discovered, let one fingernail grow long to prove that they do not work with their hands. This is not "education for development," many volunteers felt, but antidevelopment.

Such were the ambiguities that became evident to many volunteers plunged into school systems in the third world. The subjects they taught were varied, but one staple of the Peace Corps has been the teaching of the volunteers' own language. English, called TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), is taught by volunteers on three continents. In many nations it is clearly a useful enterprise. However, the teaching of English in the former French colonies of Africa has been a subject of controversy within the Peace Corps.

Science teaching, in contrast to English, has been a generally happy enterprise for volunteers. Here American values are useful, for the pragmatic, mechanical bent of most young Americans is probably better suited to science than to any other subject. In most third-world classrooms, science is taught by rote out of a book, and nearly always the book itself is foreign. Students rarely if ever have a chance to work out a principle with their hands, or to see in the real world an example of what they are studying. Products themselves of a nonscientific background, where natural events are explained by theology, they are offered science through texts whose examples are taken from Europe rather than from the world outside their doorstep.

Even a volunteer who is not specialized in science can usually do better than that. Many have instituted field trips in their schools, so that students for the first time can see in their own familiar world tangible illustrations of scientific principles. Others have designed simple experiments using local materials, providing their students with their first experience of working scientific experiments with their hands. In Tanzania, a volunteer teaching elementary physics brought ice from his kerosene refrigerator into his classroom and let the students watch it change from solid to liquid. Simple: but no one else did it, and those students had never seen water in its solid form. The scientific approach laps over into other subjects. One volunteer, using *The African Queen* in a literature class in the Cameroons, suddenly realized that half his students had no idea what a boat was or, therefore, what the story was about. After that, he devoted time to the study of boats, bringing photographs of different kinds of ships into the classroom.

Teaching teachers

In some cases, volunteer teachers have a chance to teach these simple methods of conveying science to local teachers. In India, volunteers with no science background have successfully conducted practical workshops for Indian science teachers.

Conflict with the local "system" was a problem in most Peace Corps operations: volunteers were at odds with the established way of doing things. As the Peace Corps grew, sheer numbers of volunteers in a school system created its own set of problems. This was especially true of the Peace Corps secondary school programs in Africa. On the assumption that, if one hundred volunteers in a country are good, six hundred are six times as good but not six times as hard to plan and administer, the Peace Corps literally swamped the schools of some countries. By 1965, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Liberia were crawling with volunteer teachers. (By no accident, two of these nations were also leading American client-states in sub-Saharan Africa.) Nigeria had the biggest group of Peace Corps teachers in the world: 570 in 1966. Ethiopia had 500 in 1966, with an extraordinary 180 in Addis Ababa alone. In Ethiopia, volunteers constituted a third of all secondary school teachers, and the staff spoke at one time of increasing the total to over 1000.

The volunteers' importance in the school systems of such countries was cited by the Peace Corps with pride. But flooding the schools with teachers created a dangerous dependence on the Peace Corps, whose goal was making countries *less* dependent on outsiders—Americans as well as ex-colonials.

Numbers were also a distinct handicap to the volunteers. In cities like Addis Ababa, the volunteers retreated from the Ethiopia around them into a stifling Little America of their own making. "Our big-

gest problem is each other" was a common remark where volunteers were found in groups. In Cameroon a volunteer teaching in a missionary-run school, all of whose staff, like himself, were white, commented acidly that "this is the first time I've lived in an all-white community." The more time the volunteers spent with each other, the less they spent with the local people, the less they knew about the country and—though this was not realized at first—the less effective they were in the classroom. The temptation to retreat from the local scene affects all volunteers, of course; having other young Americans around just increases the odds that the volunteer will take the easy path.

From even the most troubled of teaching programs, the majority of volunteers have gone home relatively happy with their two years. Armed with their American optimism and faith in education, they have found their satisfaction in their own performance and in the struggle for existence overseas. If that performance was less than outstanding, it was often better than that of the local teacher against which the volunteer compared himself. And if the struggle to exist was much easier in an elite school compound than the image of hardship the volunteer saw when he applied to the Peace Corps, getting along in another culture, even in a superficial way, was always a challenge to someone who had never been out of middle-class America. As a result, most teachers report (in the questionnaires filled out when they finish their service) that they believe they were useful and that they would do the same job over again.

Where the living was particularly easy, volunteers usually were able to rationalize the difference between their home-and-servant and the mud hut they had expected. Interviewed in the field, these volunteers came up with ingenious explanations to justify the way they were living. A favorite line of reasoning went: the elite will make the decisions about this country's future, and to gain the elite's respect we have to live like them. Maureen Carroll, an early Philippines volunteer, found these reactions when she returned there in 1966. "Although their students represent all levels of society, the volunteers live, work and socialize mostly with their professional and middle-class peers," she wrote. Miss Carroll also found that: "In many cases the style of volunteer living has changed dramatically from the early days of the program, when most volunteers lived in small rural barrios. . . .

'That hut business'

"The recurrent volunteer remarks to me about their living conditions ran the gamut in tone from guilt and discomfort to justification and defensiveness. 'We've really got the easy life here in the Philippines. . . . I didn't live so well at home. . . . I've got an air-conditioned bedroom. . . . After all, these people we're living with are Filipinos, too. . . . They're the potential agents of change; they need our support and encouragement. . . . I can't communicate with a fisherman. . . . That hut business is just a lot of image anyway.' "

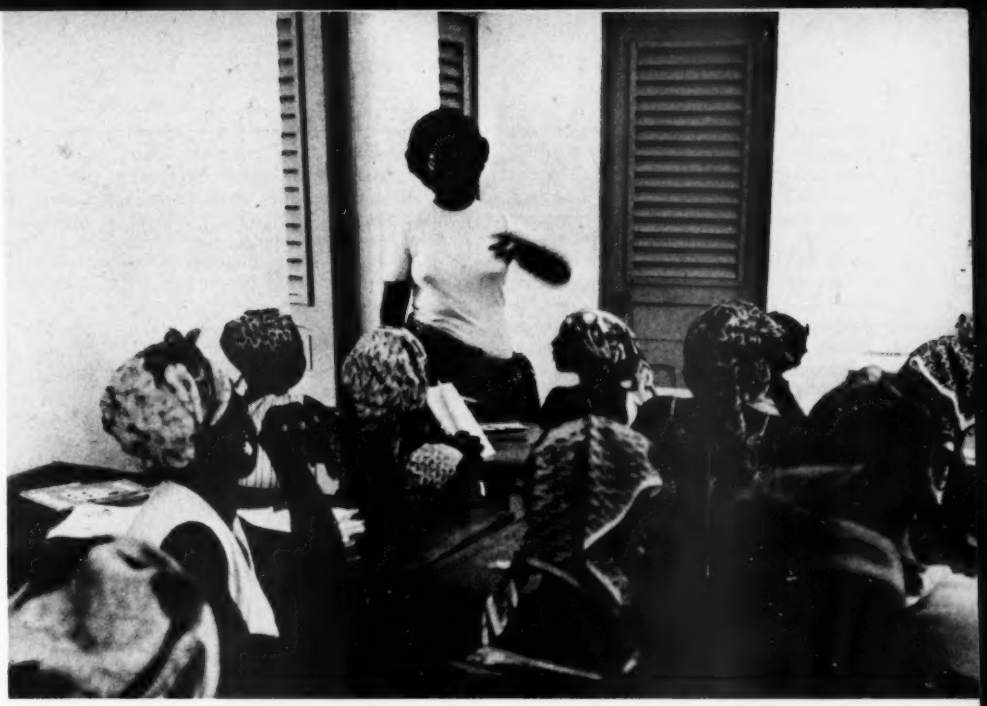
In the little African nation of Togo, Peggy Anderson, another volunteer teacher who returned later to the scene of her service, found that the volunteers tended to reduce their ambitions to fit their situation. They were teaching English, which many of them did not feel was a high-priority need in Togo. Most were living an elite life, having little contact with average Togolese. Only an exceptional few of the teachers had succeeded in climbing the barriers between themselves and the Togolese—they were learning the local language and getting to know their communities. Some had moved out of their European-style houses.

"But the average volunteer is not so lucky, or so resourceful," Miss Anderson reported. "Instead of seeking the experience he expected, he accepts the experience he gets; instead of changing his situation, he changes his objectives. By the time he goes home, the original goals have vanished.

"Everybody will leave a few friends, they say as they depart, and in that claim lurks the greatest irony of all: volunteers who shudder to hear the Peace Corps called an instrument of American foreign policy or American propaganda are satisfied—*are satisfied*—to go home knowing they have made some friends for America, even though they can see that that is of virtually no use to Togo."

Not all volunteers were satisfied with such justifications for their presence. As the Peace Corps involvement in education grew, an articulate minority of volunteers began to question the value of what they were doing. Skepticism was found, especially in those countries that have a combination of widespread illiteracy and overdeveloped school systems. The schools produce more graduates than

Volunteer David Rubin teaches a night class in adult education in Yala, Thailand.



Volunteer Anita Quick teaches a literacy class in Toumodi, Ivory Coast. She also teaches household skills, nutrition and health to women.

the economy can employ and, because the dropout rate is high, they turn out droves of half-educated people who refuse manual labor and yet are qualified for nothing else. "Educated unemployment" is common in India, and in Nigeria, hundreds of thousands of dropouts are decaying in the cities. (More accurately, they are "pushouts": primary school graduates who could find no place in secondary schools.) These unemployable, whether they are pushouts or the graduates of the secondary school system, are ripe for brainless revolutionary movements. Rotting in urban shanty towns, bitter because they missed the elite gravy train, these lost youths are more prone to respond to the appeal to hatred of a Hitler than to, say, the self-help appeal of a Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Without just this class of marginal citizen such senseless conflicts as the one in Cyprus might never have generated much steam. Some volunteers began to ask whether the Peace Corps, by its support of these very school systems, was not merely helping to produce a class of citizens whose only visible potential is for atavistic and autocracy-prone conflict.

As ex-volunteers and staff members brought back descriptions of what was going on overseas, the Peace Corps decision makers have begun to take another look at their original conception of their role in teaching. Their reaction was remarkably fast, in terms of history, especially bureaucratic history. At first the agency simply accepted what was then an unchallenged view of education. Others are still trying to transplant their systems unchanged to other societies. In a few short years, the Peace Corps has moved ahead of them in its thinking. The Peace Corps strength lies, not in the ability to avoid mistakes, but in the willingness to learn from its own experience and to discard its own preconceptions and those of the experts.

That size in Peace Corps operations is not always an asset had become increasingly obvious to some officials. Like dinosaurs eating themselves into extinction, the huge teaching operations were visibly sagging under their own weight. The numbers in the Philippines, an early field for wholesale broadcasting of volunteers, were cut back drastically before being allowed to crawl back up to the present total of eight hundred. In 1966, the Africa Region of the Peace Corps embarked on a new policy toward both numbers and teaching in general. Washington also decided to de-emphasize the teaching of English in French Africa. This decision was reached after two years of internal debate; by contrast, French and other foreign agencies sending English teachers to that region have *never* to our knowledge seriously questioned the value of what they were doing.

Numbers trimmed

In the big African teaching programs, the trend by 1966 was to hold down the number of volunteers. Coincidence played a part in this change. The Ethiopian Government, seeing its landscape overrun by young Americans, cut back its request. Nigeria was a more painful case. Despite all sort of efforts by volunteers as well as staff, the teachers there were still living in isolation from the African environment. Nigeria's internal troubles also devalued its status as the world capital of Peace Corps teaching; in the 1967 civil war, volunteers had to be evacuated from Eastern Nigeria. Far from dreaming of ever-greater numbers, Washington was coming to wish it had not gotten so deeply involved in Nigeria's schools. More important, the Peace Corps had dropped teaching as its priority goal in Africa in favor of what it called "rural transformation."

Washington began to put more stress on the importance for teachers of community involvement. Shriver had stated this principle as far back as 1962: "We're not sending people overseas who want to be only teachers. . . . A teacher whose role is restricted to the classroom is like a fighter with one hand tied behind his back." But this ideal remained largely on paper in the early years, perhaps because it was often seen as motivated by considerations of foreign policy: the hand tied behind the back was only the hand of friendship. Nice, but not important. The volunteers were in an environment where community involvement, whether it meant getting acquainted with peasants or fraternizing with students, was viewed by their host-country colleagues as distasteful and perhaps vaguely threatening. Many volunteers responded to any criticism of their position with the cult of professionalism: they were there to teach, and time spent on community involvement would only detract from their primary purpose. Host country officials, when Peace Corps staff proposed measures designed to promote the volunteers' local involvement, were baffled if not

offended. Who wants to hang out with peasants? And why learn about a primitive culture which we are trying to destroy through our schools? But the Peace Corps clung to its belief that a teacher who did not know his students' culture could not be effective in the classroom.

Despite various forms of opposition, the Peace Corps has made considerable progress on this issue. Austerity has proved to be the strongest force that can push teachers toward community involvement. To some, Peace Corps austerity is simply polishing the "mud hut image" for the sake of Congress and the American public, and others see it as a repellent way of moralizing about the Puritanical virtues of service-in-poverty; but in fact austerity has a hard pragmatic justification. The only way to understand how people live is to live as much as possible the way they do and, in the third world, that means living poorly (if you identify with the people rather than with the elites). Accordingly, Washington has been cutting volunteer living allowances, taking away vehicles provided by its early mother-hen administrators, and in many places the agency has tried to get teachers housed in the local town instead of in the school compound. Some volunteers have howled, but in general these changes has been accepted with good grace. Ironically, the loudest howls—and in 1966 the threat of a strike—came from the teachers in Nigeria, who until then enjoyed what was probably the highest standard of living in the Peace Corps. (What the Peace Corps has come to consider "too high" a standard of living is often considered too low by others, especially other Americans overseas. Depending on the local cost of living, volunteers get from $50 to $175 a month plus housing. Another $75 a month is banked for them at home.)

Barriers to involvement

But in the walled-off schools of Africa and the elitist universities of Latin America, there is considerable question whether the goal of community involvement, as now defined, can in fact be attained by the average volunteer. So far, at least, he has not done it. The barriers that separate school from community seem to be too high for any but the exceptional volunteers to scale. One alternative, proposed by many volunteers, is to define the "community" as the school itself Volunteer professors in Latin America hold that there is plenty to do on campus without plunging into the slums, and a teacher in Africa, viewing the anarchy in his school, may say that reform begins at home. But the students themselves were born outside the walls, in another culture, and the teacher volunteer who does not understand that world is hardly qualified to promote reform on campus.

Beyond this, the Peace Corps is only beginning to face the fundamental issue of whether it is worthwhile to send volunteers to teach in an irrelevant school system. When Washington began to realize what the schools do to students, the first reaction was to go along with the volunteer's own rationalizations. If he was doing a good job in his class, it was argued, his pupils were benefiting, and maybe other teachers would emulate the volunteer. Changes wrought by volunteers in their schools—and there have been many changes—were cited with pride in Washington, with little thought to whether the changes would outlast the volunteers' presence, or spread to other schools, or, indeed, whether they were worth two years of his time. Great stress was laid on the volunteer's activities outside class: starting sports teams and school libraries, or doing something worthwhile in summer vacation. At the very least, the volunteer was a "good seed," and, if the soil seemed rather flinty, no one has yet proved that it was totally barren.

Recently a new and more radical school of thought has appeared among a minority in Washington. In the view of this group, the "new purpose," as some of them call it, of the Peace Corps in teaching should be to concentrate on educational reform. Sending volunteers just to fill teaching slots is not enough, unless they are in a position to be agents of change. In assigning volunteers, preference should be given to those jobs in which they can have the greatest effect on the educational structure. While this group does not oppose the standard secondary classroom jobs that are the staples of Peace Corps teaching—where it hopes they will motivate reform by their example—it is far more interested in assignments in which the volunteers' influence can be multiplied. One obvious example is teacher-training institutions, where the volunteer can bring his American methods and attitudes to hundreds of future teachers who in turn will teach thousands of children. Another favored assignment is primary and pre-primary schools, because the system here is usually far less rigid than in the standard secondary school: the children have not yet been so thoroughly beaten into the rote-learning mold.

The "new purpose" is an advance over traditional thinking, and it is shared by some third world leaders, most notably Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, but it carries its own set of dangers. Its proponents have understood the role of education as a conveyor of culture. They want the culture that comes off the conveyor belt into the students' minds to be different from what is now being loaded on. These are not old-style missionaries seeking to impose a rigid dogma on helpless pupils. Their cultural imperialism is a mild variety whose goals—problem-solving, democracy, creativity—are positive values in *American* eyes. Yet it does not take too great a leap of the imagination to visualize the new purpose taken to an extreme. Then we would hear the schoolchildren of the third world reciting to their approving volunteer teacher: "Our ancestors, the Founding Fathers, were democrats and innovators. . . ."

In many ways, the Peace Corps recently has been groping toward a clearer view of what it can and cannot do in education. From the first fuzzy view of education as a general need in the third world, the agency is moving toward a more sophisticated knowledge of the school systems of individual nations and the problems and possibilities it can expect to find within each of those systems. Peace Corps officials have begun to distill out some of the lessons implicit in the experiences of the thousands of volunteers who have taught overseas. On the whole, they have acquitted themselves surprisingly well. Going into difficult classrooms in school systems they did not understand, and usually without ever having faced a class before, most volunteers have performed at least adequately.

Power of teaching

Nonetheless, the Peace Corps experience indicates that the agent-of-change role is especially difficult and dangerous in teaching. Promoting the boiling of drinking water, for example, may involve a volunteer in the complexities of social change, but he is at least seeking a well-defined goal. The volunteer promoting boiled water deals with cultural problems only as they affect that primary goal. In the hazier field of education, however, changing or preserving the culture itself often seems to be the goal, so the volunteer is necessarily thrust into a much more sensitive area. Another danger is that almost any teaching situation gives the volunteer too much power. In most of the Peace Corps jobs we discuss in the following chapters, the volunteer deals with adults who are free to accept or reject what he has to offer. Even if they accept the goal of boiled drinking water, the people rather than the volunteer will determine what forms of cultural change they will undergo in order to achieve the goal. School is different. In that closed institutional setting, the pupil, whether he is a primary schoolchild or a student teacher, has little liberty in his confrontation with the volunteer. This power inevitably tempts the volunteer to what one Indian called "the smuggling of cultural values under the cloak of education." The difficulty of determining whether a teacher is really providing something useful to his students or just "smuggling cultural values" is perhaps the most basic problem facing any agency intervening in the schools of another society. That question has been raised, but not resolved, by the Peace Corps experience.

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Work with, not for

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I share the same view as Richard Smith in his letter (October VOLUNTEER) concerning the assumption that we Americans must do something *for* the poor "unfortunates" of the world. This theory is not the most effective way of getting the ball rolling in the right direction. To associate and work *with* the host country is a far better method.

I cannot agree with his attitude of staying home as a solution even if the basic reason were to his dislike. Any nation which would practice isolation to achieve peace would, on the contrary, be detrimental to its goal.

Having served in a Vietnam combat zone, I've seen the need of a Vietnam program such as Paul Krause suggested. I would indeed return to clear the cities of rubble and start rebuilding. The task would be difficult, but its fruits worth the effort. True, we haven't been asked, but do we sit home and wait to be asked while the chance to show our peaceful desires lessens?

In answer to "Where are the Volunteers" I say, "Seek and you shall find."

JOSEPH E. PITTSON

Seattle

An Amish contribution

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I would like to second the suggestion made in a letter from Chris Butowicz (September VOLUNTEER) that we recruit the Amish.

In order for the Peace Corps to be more effective, there is a dire need to improve the quality of training programs. The help of the Amish, with their skills and know-how in farm practices, could prove very advantageous if training sites could be established in their communities. Such a combination of persons with setting would serve to sharpen the practical skills of the trainees and help them to cultivate the ability to use common sense. The trainees would also get a taste of what it is like to live without the amenities of electricity and modern mechanisms, being placed in a German-Dutch language atmosphere instead of always hearing English, and experiencing self-made entertainment. Training in this environment would also give a deeper insight into understanding the ways of some of our own citizens.

GEORGE A. NEPERT

Mysore, India

A Volunteer recruits

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I spent two weeks recruiting for the Peace Corps while I was on home leave. I expected recruiting to give me that warm feeling of being comfortably authoritative. It did. I stood behind a booth and said, "No, Peace Corps doesn't keep out radicals—I was a member of SDS." I went into Latin American history classes and tensely explained that helping develop effective local institutions in Latin America is a radical action, and in a way it doesn't make too much difference whether the institutions are guerrilla units or cooperatives. I wrenched timid girls with the need for nurses and city planners' ambitions telling them about the skills in dealing with people they would develop in the Peace Corps. I even re-convinced myself of the realism of my once clear Peace Corps ideals, and then sat biting my nails in confusion about the gap between ideals and reality because I wasn't so re-convinced.

My little demagoguery with the rhetoric of Peace Corps took place against a background of what seemed to me political chaos. I was an insistent door-to-door missionary from the Jehovah's Witnesses who was not sure to what extent his potential convert was listening to him just to put him on when what really interested the listener was the family squabble in the background.

It's hard for me to be that sure about the value of Peace Corps when a guy from SDS has me half convinced not only that he is going to start a revolution, but also that he should. I don't know how to describe the seriousness, and at the same time the pleasantness of the groups of "upper echelon" SDS people I heard in a panel discussion. They are good recruiters and tended to distract one from Peace Corps, as did such things as the presidential campaign of Dick Gregory, the student Black Action groups (that friends tell me not even to try to talk to unless I like being put down) the cold coffee campaigns of both Nixon and Humphrey, and the seductive respect one gets for Wallace. My liberal mind, which left the States when you could still pretty well tell a person's politics by his clothes, is stretched even further out of shape by the fact that the political confusion is matched by the visual confusion. Peace pendants are being sold in department stores, people that look like accounting majors are wearing necklaces, and blacks go around in African dress. One's tendency is to become less interested in spreading the gospel about the Peace Corps and more interested in the family squabble in the background. The terrifying thing about the squabble is that there's so much conviction and so few generally recognized gains. It's like enraged, musclebound bulldozers trying to push muddy lava back into a volcano.

Given the squabble and the mesmerizing intensity of some of the participants, I felt a little silly to be leaving home again, or convincing other people to, even though I'm not sure what I'd do if I stayed home, or what they'd do if they stayed home. The obvious point is, I guess, that what's happening at home makes it necessary for both the Volunteer and the potential Volunteer to be clearer about what they're getting and what they're paying for it. For them to be clearer Peace Corps as an institution must explain itself more clearly. The problem is, who knows how to do that, and has the energy to get Peace Corps to adopt his ideas.

PATRICK HARE

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

System should be questioned

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Mal Warwick's article entitled "Toward a social revolution" in the October issue of THE VOLUNTEER was excellent. His understanding and expression of education and social change reveals the depth of his experience in working with people. I especially liked his definition of education as an opening to change, "honest self-evaluation" and "questioning of one's environment."

Ironically this understanding of education is thwarted and repressed on some college campuses here in the United States. In my recent travel for the National Student YWCA I have discovered that students on small isolated college campuses are never encouraged to question their system of education. They have never experienced "honest self-evaluation" or "honest dialogue." To find this in an educational institution is indeed disheartening.

SARAH JANE STEWART
YWCA, Southern Region
Atlanta

Back to changing attitudes

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Park Teter's appeal for integration of Peace Corps with the individual host countries suffers, I think, from a basic misconception ("The Peace Corps fetish," THE VOLUNTEER, October). If the host countries can provide sophisticated, concerned and aware individuals as examples for their people, they do not need Peace Corps' services. Peace Corps money, under Mr. Teter's plan, would go down the same drain as other forms of foreign aid without proper strings attached, the strings in this case being the American approach to solving problems.

The approach of Peace Corps administration has changed radically in the last few years. Apparently Volunteers used to have much more freedom, for better or worse. It is moot whether the good effects outweighed the bad. However the present policy of putting administrative and financial clamps on the Volunteer and assigning him to the same kind of bureaucratic position he may have tried to get away from in the States, ensures that the total effect will be little or nothing —little if any change of anachronistic cultural attitudes—and little interest among potential Volunteers to pursue this kind of "slot-filling."

It might not be presumptuous to ask how "aware" Mr. Teter himself is "of the joys and problems of the hosts" of "the dreams and difficulties faced by the educated Moslem girl in her own country." For an anthropologist it might be enlightening to know these things, but most Volunteers in Iran are already aware that, for the most part, the educated Iranian's dream is of leaving the country as quickly as he can. Our function can be to hasten change by example or at least temporarily to provide interest for these understandably frustrated people who have so much to offer their country.

The change that Mr. Teter proposes is valid only if the Peace Corps changes its name, which is associated with something else entirely. I think that the Peace Corps should return to its earlier program of promoting attitude change, instead of Volunteer-watching, which seems to be its present habit. It certainly cannot if the forces resisting change are controlling the organization in the host countries.

Certainly some preaching of Peace Corps values is always in order, but Mr. Teter's all but meaningless rhetoric (how can we have Volunteer get-togethers in Iran, for example, when some Volunteers are three days' bus ride from the capital?) is not the ticket. His glib approach to these matters is not only a waste of time to the serious Volunteer, but also a complete about-face from the smiling PR man some of us in Iran met this summer.

VALDEMAR SCHULTZ
Ahar, Iran

A time bomb

To THE VOLUNTEER:

One fellow Peace Corps Volunteer once said to me, "I think the most important thing that I learned after four years in the university was that I no longer needed it." I think we can apply the same to the Peace Corps experience. If the Peace Corps is to function properly in the education and development of its members, then it should be hurling them all the time more and more away from the vortex and into the "undefined limits." Eventually, one should come to the point of realization that he no longer needs the Peace Corps in order to function. His position becomes autonomous; the direct one-to-one relationship is no longer necessary. The player's motivation comes from the "played with." The madman becomes an effective fanatic, dissolved into his people.

Nobody likes to be reminded that the Peace Corps as an organization is going through a number of stages. It was born, and now it is being transformed. Eventually, sophisticated transition gives way to the ultimate stage where the Peace Corps is dissolved, and being no longer needed—it dies. People don't like to think that a country can get along without the help of the Peace Corps, but this latter point is the very goal of that organization. The Peace Corps must be a time bomb which effectively blows up and destroys itself in the end. To remain in any one of the stages of transition and be contented with that stage would negate the necessary blow-up of the bomb.

That is why in the end, the only ones who will be able to meet the goals of the Peace Corps will be the ones who are "mad". And, as Ignazio Silone says, "It isn't easy to discover who the really mad people are; that's one of the most difficult of sciences."

JOHN BRANDI
Former Volunteer
Juneau, Alaska

Against servant 'dogma'

To THE VOLUNTEER

I disagree strongly with the dogma expressed by David Zarembka ("Involvement is real job") in the October VOLUNTEER. The advantages and disadvantages of employing servants have been debated many times before. Obviously the decision must vary with the post, the job, and the Volunteer. If Mr. Zarembka can draw and carry water, chop firewood, cook, do laundry, etc., without neglecting his regular job and still find time for "off duty" community work, more power to him. But his contention that a Volunteer *must* do these things in order to discover what needs improvement in his town is sheer nonsense. No one living in a rural African town could fail to notice that the water supply is poor, the roads terrible, the medical facilities inadequate, etc. The local people are just as aware of these things as the expatriates.

Mr. Zarembka's second point is equally unsound. He thinks that by virtue of being an educated, moderately wealthy person from a developed country, a Volunteer is capable of effecting changes in the local society. People, both nationals and expatriates, who work full time in community development, public health, or agriculture know how difficult it is to change established practices. There is no harm in a Volunteer trying to do community development work after working hours and on weekends, but it's very likely that it won't do much good either. I suggest that if a Volunteer doesn't feel that he is making a real contribution to the host country in his regular job, he should apply for a different job.

Involvement in the daily life of host country people is interesting, enjoyable, and part of the Peace Corps experience. It may contribute greatly to the personal growth of the Volunteer. But it's not "the reason for being."

CAROL PARFITT

Kwoi via Kafanchan
Nigeria

Servants need not be barriers

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

David Zarembka (letter to THE VOLUNTEER, October) implicitly argues that a Peace Corps Volunteer *cannot* become involved nor understand the daily life of local people while employing a servant. It does not take much for any Volunteer with a little perception to realize, as Mr. Zarembka says, that a great deal of improvement is needed in many areas.

A servant can be a valuable source of information: what people may be thinking, what complaints and wishes they have, and what some of their more intimate needs may be. It perhaps never occurred to Mr. Zarembka that a Volunteer could buy food and other necessities for his household while still employing a servant, thereby having some of the necessary contact with the local community.

Employing a servant often becomes a necessity for Volunteers who have taken on a heavy work schedule (I teach 38 hours a week). It is sometimes impossible for a Volunteer to spend many hours washing clothes, keeping house, and preparing meals.

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Reports from all over

DATE: December, 1968
-January, 1969

The staff gap has caught us in the middle. Due to a four-month vacancy on our staff, the December and January issues of THE VOLUNTEER are being combined into this 32-page edition. We hope to welcome a new associate editor after the first of the year, and to get back on schedule with one issue every month.

□ □ □

"The bureaucratic personality" is the subject of a four-year study recently completed by Leonard V. Gordon, professor of educational psychology at State University in Albany, N. Y. Among the more interesting findings: The most "bureaucratically oriented" individuals are long-term residents in a Veterans Administration institution; the least "bureaucratically oriented" are Peace Corps Volunteers. Dr. Gordon's criteria for measuring bureaucratic adaptability included an assessment of an individual's willingness to fully comply with the wishes of a superior, his strict adherence to rules and regulations, his preference for formal relationships on a job, confidence in "expert" judgment, and his concern only for his own area of activity.

□ □ □

"The nearest thing to a Doer's school." That's how *Time* magazine describes the Peace Corps in a recent essay ("You Don't Have To Be Powerless") about the role of the "everyday activist . . . the disrupter for good" in a technological society. The Doer, according to *Time*, "is self-starting, and constantly in motion. His ego is proof against reverses. His is likely to be a moralist rather than an ideologue—a Ralph Nader instead of a Mark Rudd. . . ." The Peace Corps is the closest thing to a "Doer's school" because, says *Time*, it "deliberately sets out to instill self-confidence and self-sufficiency in its Volunteers. It demands performances that the trainee may not have suspected he had in him."

□ □ □

Staff members in the Office of Volunteer Finance were startled to receive this letter recently: "Dear Sirs: Here is my husband and my passport. We would appreciate it if you would send it back to us after it is cancelled." Only the passports were enclosed. The Office of Finance would like to remind Volunteers that it is no longer necessary to return passports to Washington for cancellation. Only in-country trainees who are leaving the Peace Corps need send their passports to the Office of Finance.

□ □ □

Add a Sa! and a Sha to the expanding list of country newsletters. *Sa!*, formerly *The Fiji Rag*, is a journal published by Peace Corps Volunteers in Fiji. *Sha* ("From the Grassroots") originates in Niger and has been around a bit longer.

□ □ □

Measuring progress: From Honduras, *The Mayan* reports that Peace Corps doctor Mark Hess estimates he will have injected more than five quarts of the hepatitis preventative "gamma globulin" into the back sides of Volunteers before he completes his two-year term of duty.

□ □ □

For the late Christmas shopper, here's a gift idea from a *Washington Post* comic strip. It's the latest thing in non-violent toys—a set of lead Peace Corps workers.

I believe that an imaginative Volunteer could successfully integrate himself within any community while still employing a servant. One need not be shielded, dictated to, or insulated from a local community while having a servant—unless, of course, he wants to be.

HARVEY J. LANDRESS

Kangavar, Iran

An 'involved Volunteer'

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

As a result of the emphasis on "involvement with host country nationals" in the October issue, notably the article "The Peace Corps fetish" and a letter from David Zarembka, I have indeed become what anyone would call an "involved Volunteer." I have taken Mr. Zarembka's advice and am now cooking my own food, going to the store and market, cleaning house, all of which are the most definitive marks of the "involved Volunteer." I now sense that I am aimed towards that goal which all true Volunteers strive for—"involvement with host country nationals." The radiant light is now in sight.

The thing that has made the greatest difference in this matter is going to the store and market. This simple act has allowed great opportunity for intimate discourse with the shop boys and market women. I now feel that I, for the first time, am beginning to understand how real, yes real, Ethiopians think and feel and what their most basic needs are as human beings. I have been surprised to find these needs and feelings to be very similar to my own, all of which goes to demonstrate the basic unity of mankind—John Donne put it something like this: "No man is an island," a truth which had begun to smolder and die in my mind, but which now is being rekindled due to the enlightening, inspiring words on "involvement" in the last issue. And to think that this great philosophical, spiritual renewal could be initiated by a simple, mundane action such as "going to the store and market." My deepest gratitude goes out to you, and especially to Mr. Zarembka, for your practical, earthy advice.

VAN O. ANDERSON

Bahar Dar, Ethiopia

Housework is his forte

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

As a Volunteer who does live without a boy, I have definite things to say about David Zarembka's letter (October VOLUNTEER).

Regardless of the argument that menial housework will keep you from getting involved in the community, I've found that the time lost from housework is not too much. In addition, as a teacher, I've found some physically demanding task like peeling potatoes or scrubbing the floor gets my mind off school problems temporarily, a respite necessary to keep in good mental health. As for providing employment, or circulating money in the community, there are many other ways of doing this. Finally, living in a city I am appalled by the number of young men hired here simply because of the vague dream of becoming a white man's boy. Who, pray, helps create this illusion?

There are positive points, too. My students are shocked to find out I wash my own socks, and that's good. There are far too many stereotypes that need to be broken so much the better. Dinner I prepare for my local friends mean more, because it is I, not a boy who does it. At any rate, I feel I have given more of myself and my guests are impressed when I come up with something resembling their own dishes. And the two weeks I was without running water and had to lug the stuff myself, was an excellent occasion to chat with the housewives of the quartier. Nothing was funnier than to watch me struggle back to my house with a sloshing bucket on each arm. And perhaps nothing was more human.

BILL MILLER

Yaounde, Cameroon

Troubles in Culver City

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

With troubles in East Los Angeles, why am I in Ethiopia? Yet, there are problems in Culver City (my home town) which should keep me out of the other side of L. A. However, can I help make Culver City green when my own family is a little on the brown side? Then, again, should I be working on my brother, when my own soul needs cleansing? But helping only myself might be labeled as selfish.

Dr. Joe Murphy, our new director, soothed some troubled thoughts with a few poignant sentences:

"Certainly, there's good reason for feeling pangs of guilt at being away from America at times like these. But whatever guilt we may experience, it is guilt based at least partially on a super-nationalist assumption, vis that somehow American life, or American institutions are more important and a more worthy object of concern and commitment than Ethiopian life and Ethiopian institutions. . . . It seems to me that the only reason for the Peace Corps, or any organization which purports to render service to others, is an honest belief that the people and institutions of that country are equally important and worthy of concern and commitment as our own.

RICK DASSANCE

Lekempte, Ethiopia

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